

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Thursday, July 8. 1708.

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**S**olomon says, he that meddles with Contention that does not belong to him, is like one that taketh a Dog by the Ears, and I am not unmindful of his Caution in the Case before me—Nor shall I meddle with the Personal Part of the Quarrel; I neither know the Persons nor their Design in it; but I cannot but set right the Judgments of other People a little concerning things as they occur, and I am not concern'd who takes that wrong, since this is not intended to give any Personal Offence, and they that put such a Construction upon it, must be in great want of some body to quarrel with.

The *Post-Boy*, it seems, has publish'd in one of his Papers, an Account which is ta-

ken to be a Reflection upon two of the *North-Britain* Prisoners, that they were to be Evidences against some of the rest.

I presume, the *Post Boy* does not pretend to say of his own Knowledge that it was so, for, *I own, I have not seen his Paper*, if he had, he had been obliged to prove it, or own his abusing the Gentlemen—But publishing it as a Report, as a thing discours'd of, as a thing he has heard; this I cannot, I confess, see so much Ground of Offence in, as the other makes of it; and all the Satisfaction any Gentleman can desire of the Author, is to acknowledge he was misinform'd, or to say again, that whereas he heard so before, he now hears it is a Mistake—For to ask him to publish who it

was

was he had it from, or who he heard say so, or the like, were to expect of the *Post Boy*, that he should act that very Part they account so scandalous, turn Informer against his Friends, or betray Conversation, and become the same infamous thing, they allege, he has represented them to be; and this I fancy, the Gentlemen cannot expect of him.

Besides, I must tell the Gentlemen, I hope without Offence, That whereas the Animadversion that has been made, whether by their Order or no, seems to threaten uncommon Resentment, I had almost call'd it Revenge, on the Persons of the Authors; to desire the *Post Boy* to inform them who it was, is to make him necessary to all the Mischiefs that may follow; and whereas that Threatning is in itself a Breach of the *English* Laws, and, if it was Personal, would make the Persons liable to give Security for the Peace; so to expect the *Post-Boy* to lead Men to the Principals, would be to bring him in for a Share in the Blood, if any thing of that Nature should follow it. But this by the way.

Now perhaps the *Post-Boy* had this in Conversation as a Story told, or heard it related as a Piece of News, and the Person he had it of, had no such design as these People suggest—Why, what Satisfaction can they demand? I believe, all the Printers of News in this Town have thought it sufficient to say we hear such a thing, or it is reported so and so; and without Reflection on the *Flying-Post*, I make no doubt but he will own, he has printed things before now on an Authority as light as a we hear, or it is reported, and I need not go back to enquire of all the Writers in the Town—And what do Gentlemen expect in such Cases?—They are always satisfy'd with the same Authors saying in his next Paper—*We were misinform'd*, or *such a Report proves a Mistake*; I cannot but therefore say, the *Flying-Post* in his Reply has been very hard upon his Brother Author, with his Villanous and his Mercenaries, and such like—But for that let them talk to one another, it's none of my Business; I would advise them both not to give ill Names to each other, lest By-Standers should laugh, and say that both may be true.

But I come to the rest of the Case, and this I think, I have a Right to speak to, as the whole Nation seems to be concern'd in it; The *Flying-Post* publishes an Advertisement against the *Post-Boy* on this Account, in Terms full of Salt, and Bitter, with Language scurrilous, Threatnings unusual, and a Style insulting, such as I cannot suppose the Gentlemen themselves could dictate—And after all, I think, asking Pardon if I am wrong, that the Resentment itself is (1.) wrong grounded, and (2.) wrong extended; and of the Threatning Part I shall speak afterward.

1. I think, the Resentment is wrong grounded—I do not impose my Judgment, I only say, I THINK SO, and my Reasons are these—To say such or such Men are to be Evidences against other Persons, cannot in my Opinion be a Slander; if he had said, the Gentlemen had been innocent, and these had been FALSE Witnesses, it had indeed been slanderous, and required Resentment, and to be clear'd up—But here are Men taken up for treasonable Practices—It will not be pretended, that it is dishonourable for any Gentlemen to detect Treason, or give Testimony in Behalf of their Sovereign against Traytors.

Nor is this any Reflection on the Gentlemen at all; for if they were not guilty, no Evidence could be given; if they were guilty, her Majesty is very little oblig'd to any that should think it dishonourable, to inform their Sovereign of Treason against either her Person or Government—I know, the mistaken Notion of an Informer has prevail'd in the World, and Men of Honour think it below them to have the Name—I must take the Freedom to say, it is the Crime alone that distinguishes the Infamy of the Name, and there are Cases, in which the nicest Honour would oblige a Man to be an Informer—For Example, Suppose a Gentleman saw a Villain abusing and forcing an innocent virtuous Woman, he ought in Honour, and at the Hazard of his Life, to rescue her from the Violence, and bring the Beast to the Gallows: If he saw a Man setting Fire to another Man's House, he ought to seize the Incendiary, and deliver him to the Law: If he saw a Murderer, and took him



him in the Fact, would it be a Dishonour for him to give Testimony in a Court of Justice, that the Destroyer might die? — Treason against the Sovereign, especially THIS Treason we are talking of, SUCH a Treason, and against SUCH a Sovereign, exceeds any of these in Crime, and it had been far from a Dishonour to have been a Witness against any Person guilty of it — Indeed I am sorry to see the Advertisement suggest such an Abhorrence of detecting THIS Treason — And this makes me hope, the Gentlemen themselves are not Authors of the Advertisement.

As to betraying Friends, saving our own Lives at the Price of another Man's, and discovering merely to deliver ourselves — No Man has a greater Abhorrence of them than I, nor has many Men suffer'd more than I for refusing to betray my Trust, or expose my Friends — But then this must be in Matters just and honourable, not in Crimes against both GOD and Man, such as Treason is in the highest Degree; in such Case every Christian is to give Glory to GOD in acknowledging his Guilt, let it fall where it will, but I see nothing of that was suggested in this Case.

This I speak to set us right in the Matter of informing in Cases of Crime; and without Respect to the Persons concerned, nor at all designing to reflect upon them, *I hope they will not take it so*; The Gentlemen are Strangers to me, and I would be far from doing them the least Injury in it, perhaps I may by this open their Eyes to some Mistakes in their Resentment, which if so, they will have no reason to take it ill.

2. *I think*, the Resentment in this Advertisement *wrong extended* — I shall not judge of Meanings — But let them mean by their Threatning what they will, or who they will, when they say neither Title nor . . . . shall cover them.

Asking their Pardon, *in this they are wrong*, and they may be used very ill upon that Head, if the Government please to notice it. — 1. I must be plain to tell all Men, *who use such Language as that*, it is not Language that will go down in England; and the Author of the *Flying-Post*, tho' he is not an *English Man*, has liv'd long enough in Eng-

land to know it. THE LAW in England is every honest Man's Protection, and both will and can protect them, and cover them, and no Man upon what Ground soever can have any Room for Resentments of Injury, but such as are Legal — What they mean by customary Resentment, the *Flying-Post* ought to explain; as GOD says in other Cases, *Vengeance is mine, &c.* so the LAW which is GOD's Representative says, *Resentment and Revenge IS MINE, and I will repay it.* No Man in England has the least Liberty granted him to execute his private Revenge, Punishment belongs to Government, and he that is maltreated, must apply to the Law to obtain Justice; there is no such thing as a customary Resentment, except it be Murder, and the Gallows is the End of that; and, Gentlemen, it is upon this Foundation the Felicity and Glory of the *English Government* stands, that the LAW is open, the Channel of it runs free to the meanest Subject, even against the very Sovereign, much more against a Fellow Subject; no Offence can be committed against a Man, but the Law will give you Satisfaction for; and he that will seek his own Revenge, *or call it Satisfaction if you will, it is all one*, for an Injury, and pursue it either against the Life or Estate of his Adversary, by any Method but such as the Law directs, it is in vain to put a fair Gloss on the thing, he is a Robber and a Murderer.

If a Man has burnt your House, or ravish'd your Wife, or rifled your Goods, you may take him and deliver him up to Justice, and he shall die — But if in Revenge you will either plunder his Goods, or burn his House, or kill him, you shall die as a Criminal; for you did not kill the Murderer, or rob the Thief, but you kill'd the Man, you plunder'd the House, both which the Law had forbid.

Now, Gentlemen, *I entreat your Pardon for this Expression*, which I am sure is just. — Should you mean your Resentments at the Affront in the Extent the Advertiser seems to imply, *that is*, to what you call a Reparation of Honour, a modern Word for one of the worst Sorts of Murder — First, in the Sense of the Law you would not be deem'd Gen-